

Member Report

Major concerns of our association

Federal Concerns

During the past year, we have continued to observe the events in Ottawa knowing an election could come at any time. Our members were anxious to see how the limited version of Pharmacare would evolve. When the election was called, we proudly promoted Acer-Cart's brochure ***Seniors Issues for the 2025 Federal Election*** and encouraged our members to participate in the New Mode campaign. As the new Federal Cabinet is named, we will be watching for the Seniors Minister to be restored since it was not included in the reduced cabinet just prior to the election.

Provincial Level

The Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care continues to focus on Seniors in our province. In November, as a result of the provincial election which returned the current government, the Department of Seniors and Long Term Care, saw some personnel changes to their department. After focusing on the needed upgrades to achieve acceptable standard in Long Term Care post COVID, it has established priorities which will be intended to improve independent living in their own community. We have been working with DSLTC to define the areas needing attention in *Health and Wellness*, *Housing for Seniors*, and *Positive Aging in Age Friendly Communities*. Working collectively with our colleagues from like minded groups has enable us to see the breadth and depth of the seniors' issues in our province.

Relationship with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU)

Throughout the year, we met four times with NSTU as the Liaison Committee; included in the committee is Peter Day, the President of the NSTU, Steve Brooks, Executive Director of the NSTU and Janine Kerr, RTO Liaison Officer, and the RTO is represented by Bill Berryman, Pat Hillier and Alyson Hillier. Peter Day and Steve Brooks always make time to come and meet with our Branch Presidents when we hold meetings in the NSTU building. Their presence and willingness to speak and respond to questions posed by our members, is welcomed an appreciated by our members.

We continue to wait for a report from the Pension Panels' work but while the 2 parties (the government and the NSTU) continue to meet to discuss this situation (no cost of living for retirees post 2006) nothing has been released.

Our New Website

After many months of consulting and planning, we launched our new website (rtonstu.ca) in January. Redesigning our RTO website to provide a secure and user-friendly site was as a result of our members' request. In addition to a new logo, we have been able to offer our members the opportunity to use technology, utilize more efficient ways to communicate, respond to and access information forms. The response from our members has been positive.

Power School Breach

We learned in January one of our Regional Education Centres (former boards) was affected by the Power School Breach. Information has been very slow coming and while we are aware that some records of students were accessed. These breaches are disturbing to our members for the potential threat they pose.

Strategic Planning

In August 2025, we will hold our annual planning session. These discussions will focus on topics identified throughout the year with a view to reviewing and revising practicing to meeting to changing organizations needs.

Other items we have been:

- In March, the Shelburne hosted the Curling Bonspiel at the Barrington Curling Club with 6 teams participating.
- At our Legacy Foundation AGM on April 15th, we granted 8 awards with a total of \$12,000.00 was distributed to groups supporting children and youth across the province.
- We are pleased to see the Branches continuing to access funds from the Branch Initiative Program Fund (BIP) to support Branch activities. During the 2024 year, 64 grants were awarded for a total of \$30,622.65 in funds distributed.
- We continue to promote the health benefits available to our members through our group insurance plan benefits. It is important that our members are familiar with what is available through their health insurance plans and when changes occur to them and they are pleased to have the opportunity to attend local information sessions.
- We continue to promote the RTO to active teachers with information and participation in the NSTU pre-retirement seminars. Last year 52% of new retirees joined the RTO.
- We are currently engaged in an audit of our membership. This involves a complex correlation of our internal database, looking at the numbers of members whose dues are collected each month from their pension benefits and sent to Johnson's Insurance, as well as data from pension services. This task has been contracted out to a company that currently assists us with financial matters.

- We are planning our annual Golf Tournament for September 19th, 2025 at Lingan Golf Course in Cape Breton. While this is an annual event, this year we will be honoring our late president, Ambrose White, whose untimely death last fall impacted us all. We want to memorialize his contribution by presenting a good sportsmanship trophy to a participant who exemplifies the values which Ambrose personified.

We are grateful to our colleagues in ACER-CART and the leadership they provide to us.

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Hillier